

~~SECRET~~

Thru : Chief, Geographic Research
Chief, Geography Division
Chief, USSR Branch

6 October 1958

Proposal for New Soviet Atlas

1. The proposal for a project on "Russia and its Neighbours (sic)" is indeed an ambitious one as well as an expensive one. Although we are primarily concerned with the Atlas which will be produced by the Geography Department and would be most akin to our interests, it nevertheless will contain some of the materials and reflect in part the interest of the other disciplines involved. Most of this effort would be of very marginal intelligence interest to us.

2. The items listed in the content of the Atlas are not unique and most of the topics which would be of interest to us have already been put on maps by CIA. Although a quantity of materials will be digested to produce each map, the proposal states that the textual part of the Atlas will be kept to a minimum.

3. It is conceivable that an effort such as this might come up with something that would be of intelligence interest; however, the odds seem to be against it. It is difficult to imagine that a real thorough job of analyses could be done with their limited staff (that could emulate the work going on in both ERA and GRA) that would result in something that would be a unique contribution to intelligence.

4. The graphs and textual part of the Atlas might conceivably make a contribution but again it seems unlikely that they would come up with enough new materials (that would add to what the economic and geographic analysts are coming up with in the course of their select utilization).

5. Although we do not wish to intimate that their analysts are not first rate, their human resources are really not as great as the proposal would indicate.

6. The budget is certainly all inclusive (particularly the item for travel expenses for a trip to the Soviet Union to procure materials). It would be difficult to transcend the systematic,

~~SECRET~~

Subject: Proposal for New Soviet Atlas

sustained efforts of our PPO's. The few unique or additional items that a "one-shot" procurement mission would accomplish would hardly merit the expenditure.

7. Although there is little doubt that the preponderant gain from such a project would be enjoyed by the Academic--the faculty, graduate students, and the library, some encouragement is probably in order. Instead of outright financial aid which could possibly be better handled by some Foundation, assistance in the form of unclassified materials more readily accessible to us could be offered.

8. It is further recommended that an inventory be made of the many general and special maps produced by CIA with the thought in mind that they could possibly be assembled to form an English Language Intelligence Atlas on the USSR. Also, the economic analysts should be approached to determine whether an exploitation of the handbooks such as is proposed could yield intelligence which is not being obtained through the regular course of their research.

25X1A9a
